

State Continuity Maintenance Program Initiative

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is the new Continuity Maintenance Program Initiative?

The new Continuity Maintenance Program Initiative was first introduced and described in the updated *Continuity Planning Guidance and Plan Template (December 2009)*. It announced that, beginning in 2010, a Continuity Plan Evaluation Checklist (available on the Cal EMA Continuity webpage) is to be completed annually by the agency's/department's continuity planning team and signed by the director. The Continuity Plan Evaluation Checklist is a self-certification that an agency has developed and is maintaining a continuity plan that reflects the most current state and federal continuity planning standards and best practices. The Checklist documents the organization's Continuity Program and Plan status. The due dates for the checklists are based on the [Office of Information Security submission schedule](#) for Disaster Recovery Plans.

Why are agencies and departments being asked to complete the self-certification checklist on an annual basis?

Continuity plans and programs are dynamic and require regular updating to reflect changes in the organization (e.g., staffing, structure, functions, equipment, communications, leadership, and resources). In order to ensure that departments and agencies are updating their plans and maintaining a baseline of capability in all the key planning element areas, an annual self-assessment/self-certification program was established. The checklist is included in the updated *Continuity Planning Guidance and Plan Template (December 2009)* and also available on the Cal EMA website.

Who did Cal EMA notify within State Agencies of the release of the updated Continuity Guidelines and the new Maintenance Program initiative?

Cal EMA sent a letter to all State Agency Secretaries, dated December 14, 2009, announcing the publication and availability of the updated *Continuity Planning Guidance and Plan Template (December 2009)*. The letter also notified the Agency Secretaries of the Continuity Maintenance Program initiative to be implemented in 2010. A link to a copy of the letter to Agency Secretaries is available on the Cal EMA Continuity web page.

What is the deadline for the submittal of the completed Continuity Evaluation Checklists?

The Checklist should be mailed to CAL EMA according to the Schedule for Submission of Disaster Recovery Plans, posted on the California Office of Information Security web site (<http://www.cio.ca.gov/OIS/Government/schedule.asp>). If there are agencies that are not listed

on the Schedule, please contact CAL EMA and/or the Office of Information Security for assistance.

Where should the completed Continuity Evaluation Checklists be mailed?

The Checklists should be mailed to the following address:

California Emergency Management Agency
Preparedness Division
Continuity Program Coordinator
3650 Schriever Avenue
Mather, CA 95655

Are agencies/departments required to submit their updated Continuity Plan with the completed Checklist?

No, agencies/departments are only being asked to submit a completed Checklist that accurately documents the status of their Continuity Plan and Program. Please do not include your Continuity Plan with your submittal.

What will Cal EMA do with the Continuity Plan Evaluation Checklists once they are received?

Cal EMA will review and analyze the submitted Checklists to identify levels of completeness and planning gaps. Based on the outcome of the analysis, an After Action Review/Corrective Action/Improvement Plan will be created and used by the Continuity Program to implement needed changes to the program and supplements to current guidance. A narrative of the results will be developed in order to report the overall status of State level Continuity Planning to the Cal EMA Executive Office. This internal/informal program analysis will be completed annually. The review process will be conducted by Cal EMA's Continuity Program Manager and Program Coordinator.

If agency/department continuity planners have any feedback or suggestions for the Continuity Program, or want to share best practices or lessons learned, please direct your comments to coopcog@oes.ca.gov or contact Linda Pryor at (916) 845-8774.

Will departments receive any feedback on their Checklist by Cal EMA?

Feedback will be provided to departments upon request. Contact Linda Pryor at (916) 845-8774 for information.

As a result of the recent publication of the revised *Continuity Planning Guidance and Plan Template*, do agency/department Continuity Plans have to be reformatted to be consistent with this current template?

Agency/Department Continuity Plans do not need to use or be consistent with the format proposed in the *Continuity Planning Guidance and Plan Template*. The only imperative is that Continuity Plans address all ten crucial planning elements of the State continuity model. The Checklist is a useful tool to ensure that Continuity Plans are complete.

What is the role of Cal EMA in the State Continuity Program?

In 2006, Governor Schwarzenegger released Executive Order S-04-06, which required OES (Cal EMA) to provide Continuity planning guidelines for state and local agencies to use to update their Continuity of Operations/Continuity of Government plans. The Executive Order also required that Executive Branch agency plans be consistent with the guidance promulgated by OES (Cal EMA). The ongoing role of Cal EMA is to continue to provide guidance and best practices to assist State agencies and departments with the maintenance of their Continuity plans and programs.

Who can we contact within Cal EMA if we have further questions about the new Maintenance Initiative?

Any questions concerning the Continuity Program can be directed to coopcog@oes.ca.gov or you may contact Linda Pryor at (916) 845-8774.